



# On Our Pond

## A NEWSLETTER FOR CLEANER WATER & BETTER POND ENVIRONMENTS



Volume 9 No 4 Adopt-A-Pond is sponsored by Hillsborough County Stormwater Management, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, and YOU! Winter 2003

### WHERE WE'VE BEEN

#### Education Meetings

- 03-12 Sedgebrook Pl
- 03-11 Keystone Mnrs
- 03-13 Bethania's Pond
- 01-05 Riverglen

#### Pond Walks

- Davidsen Middle
- Carrolwood Gables
- Temple Terrace Elem

#### Events

- Teach-In, Kenly Elem
- Holiday of Lights

### CHECK US OUT...WE'RE IN COLOR



### FREEBEE BOX

- Rain Barrel Booklets & Videos
- Carp signs (w/ permit)
- AAP hats

Call for yours now!

That's right! Now you can see us in full living color... well maybe not quite *living* color. And that's not all! We've got some other changes for you inside. Take a look at **page 3** for more information on what's new... and in **COLOR!**

### On Our Pond

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## THE WORLD IS WATCHING

### And we're showin' it off!

Adopt-A-Pond has helped over 200 ponds. We have almost 5000 names on our mailing list, and we add ponds every year, but the only advertising we do is through you—that is our ponds! That's right, we don't actively solicit ponds to join our program. Every pond group in our program has come to us because they needed help and we could offer it. Now, our popularity is starting to spread. Pinellas County has started an Adopt-A-Pond. Soon Pasco County will have one. Brevard County has gotten into it, Sarasota is working on it, and we've been contacted by people in Virginia and Illinois requesting information on how we did it. Many of these agencies send representatives out to see first-hand, and guess what...we take them to see your ponds! Yep, you may not see it happening, but your ponds are serving as ambassadors to the rest of the world about how citizens can make a difference in their environment. So don't be shy, be proud of what you've accomplished, keep up the good work, and spread the word. The world is watching!



**Do you like working with people? Do you have what it takes to help others learn? The busy season of Adopt-A-Pond planting is coming up, and we're looking for a few exciting people to coordinate some of these events. Just identify the plants and show volunteers how to plant them. Events last no more than 2 hours. Set your own schedule. Training provided. Contact 307-1785 for details or email [mcgee@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:mcgee@hillsboroughcounty.org)**



## STORMWATER ECOLOGIST

### The way learning should be

Last year we introduced a new program called Stormwater Ecologist. This program was designed as a means to get our message into junior and high schools. But to do that, we've incorporated some of the latest concepts in education. Not only does this program target specific Sunshine State Standards (teachers, you know about that), but it uses hands-on discovery, critical thinking, real-world application, and service learning to reach into various learning styles and engage students.

See, if we're going to actually make a change, we can't just preach at our kids, especially today's independent information soaked generation. We have to guide them into experiences and let them come to their own conclusions. If our message is truly valid, they'll see why and they'll agree. What's more, they'll start looking past it into areas that we haven't even addressed. Now just imagine, a class of interested students who bring new information to you! What a dream right?

Well, Stormwater Ecologist can help you get there. We offer in-class critical thinking activities using a really cool Enviroscape model. We'll take you and your class out for a walk around the campus to show everyone just how much is going on there. And we'll even help students design and get into a service learning project in their area-- anything from stormdrain marking to water quality experiments, and even full scale restorations. Teachers, you owe it to your kids to check this one out. And kids, you don't have to wait, call us to see how you can get in on the action! Call or email for more information.



## COLOR AND MORE!!! The NEW On Our Pond.

As, we all know from working on our ponds, change is inevitable. Sometimes changes are good, and sometimes they aren't. Now at Adopt-A-Pond, we've learned to look forward to change, and fortunately for us, we just keep getting better and better! Our latest change is something that we've wanted to do for a long time. And we know that some of you have asked for this as well. So at long last we're able to bring you our newsletter in bright color. All the pictures will be clearer, and that pesky chart on the back page will actually make some sense!

But color isn't our only new feature. If you haven't noticed, this issue is slightly thicker than usual. Well that's because we've also ADDED A PAGE! Hopefully that excites you as much as it does us. It means we've got more space to bring you all the great stuff that we usually do. But this new page won't just be more of the same. You'll notice that the two extra pages are dedicated to issues that reach beyond the borders of the pond. Oh, it'll still have the same easy and quick-witted style, but we felt it was important to reach out past the area we've all grown accustomed to and bring you information about some of the other things the Stormwater Management Section is involved in... and all from our unique perspective as pond restorers and community volunteers.

So take a look, enjoy the color, and feel free to tell us what you think. We really do like to hear from you.

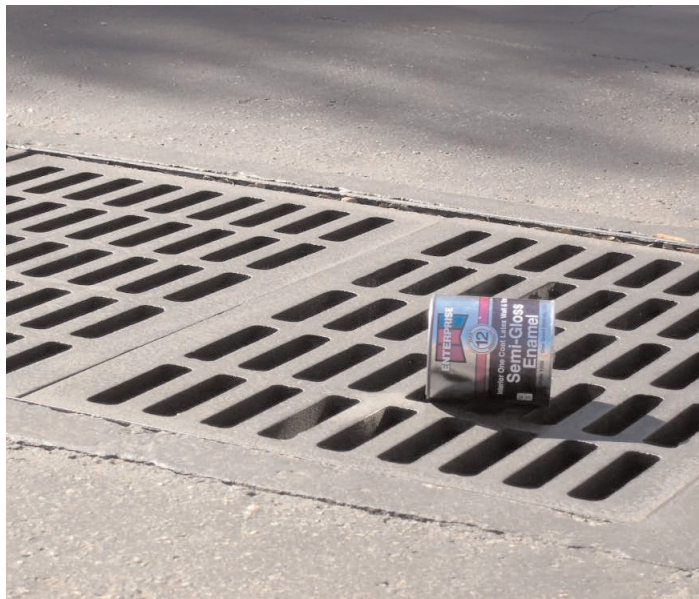


## ADOPT-A-POND EDITORIAL- Right of Entry



Recently this issue has become such a problem for us that we decided to publish a little information on it. When a pond group signs up and needs an initial cleanup, we require that the property owners, and often the owners of lots adjacent to work areas, sign off that they agree to the work. The reason for this is that Adopt-A-Pond works hard to maintain the distinction between what we do, and Hillsborough County's maintenance program. In Adopt-A-Pond, the County partners with citizens to do a *cooperative* restoration. This means it isn't mandatory. To ensure that residents understand this we require signatures on our application. For those who don't want to join the program, but do consent to the work we use a specially designed Right of Entry form. This form indemnifies the County and states the terms of the cleanup. It should be a simple thing, but too often residents don't see it that way. Let's look at our perspective.

According to County policy, maintenance of stormwater ponds is limited to situations where structures no longer function. This means they won't do anything unless system failure is documented. This is necessary due to logistic constraints. But Adopt-A-Pond is willing to come in and partner with neighborhoods to get your pond looking nice by reason of teaching pollution prevention in the process. All residents have to do is participate in the program. In the case of Right of Entry agreements, we aren't even asking you to participate because your neighbors have decided to do it for you. All we need to do is go by! Now we recognize that residents are concerned about their yards, but we agree to repair everything except sprinklers and sod, both of which are extremely easy and cheap to fix if indeed there is any damage. Yet residents are too often willing to pass up literally *thousands* of dollars in free work to protect a few dollars of grass. Well as a voluntary program, this is your choice. But think carefully, because Adopt-A-Pond can only come out once.



## WHAT IS AN ILLICIT DISCHARGE

**They're illegal, but all too common**

By David Glicksberg

Have you ever seen someone emptying their pool water into the street or into a conservation area/wetland? What about blowing leaves and grass clippings into a storm drain, or dumping yard waste into a ditch? How about that small pipe coming from someone's home or business and running to a pond or connecting to a storm sewer pipe? These are just a few examples of what we refer to as "Illicit Discharges", or in the latter case an "Illicit Connection". An illicit discharge is any discharge to a storm sewer system or surface waters that is not composed entirely of stormwater. An illicit connection is usually a pipe or some other conveyance that allows non-stormwater to enter the storm sewer system or surface waters. Washing machine, water softener, and chemically treated pool water dis-

charges are examples of all too common but illegal discharges/ connections. Even leaves and grass can cause environmental impacts to water bodies by releasing excess nutrients to the water which may cause algae blooms and lower oxygen levels in the water killing fish and other aquatic life! That's why Hillsborough County has a Stormwater Quality Management Ordinance which prohibits any illicit discharges or illicit connections (except for some exemptions which are listed below). So what should you do if you see an illicit discharge or connection? Report it to the Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough County by calling (813) 272-5960. We all can make a difference, and every little bit counts. So remember, only rain down the drain.

Discharges exempt from the Stormwater Quality Management Ordinance: landscape irrigation/lawn watering; potable water sources; air conditioning condensate; individual residential car washing (remember to wash your car in the yard and not in the driveway to minimize soapy water going into a storm drain); and emergency response activities such as fire fighting.

## HOW WE WORK TOGETHER

### Hillsborough County Mosquito Control

We're still looking at how Adopt-A-Pond works with other agencies to accomplish our goals. This issue we're looking at Mosquito Control.

As you can guess from the name, this agency is charged with management of mosquito populations in Hillsborough County. To do this, they employ a comprehensive program of monitoring-- using traps, bird mortality, and sentinel chickens to track mosquito-borne diseases, management-- using pesticide, herbicide, and breeding source reduction, and education-- to help citizens understand their role in this public health issue. Since Hillsborough County has around 50 species of mosquito, this can be quite a task, and Mosquito Control is up for it with a fleet of specialized equipment including an amphibious vehicle, a helicopter, a plane, airboats, and all kinds of specialized tools, earning them the reputation among county departments as the unit with the cool toys. But these guys aren't out there playing around. They maintain constant vigilance and action, 24 hours a day at the most crucial times of year.

Even with all this work of their own, Mosquito Control is always willing to help Adopt-A-Pond using their equipment, and even herbiciding ponds when both our program goals run together. They also participate in our Adopt-A-Pond Committee to help us continually guide our program into new and better areas. So if you see one of the Mosquito Control guys around, remember to say thanks for all their hard work.



Tim Madden (driver) & Joe Sultenfuss (sprayer) from Mosquito Control spraying some weeds in their amphibious Argo vehicle.

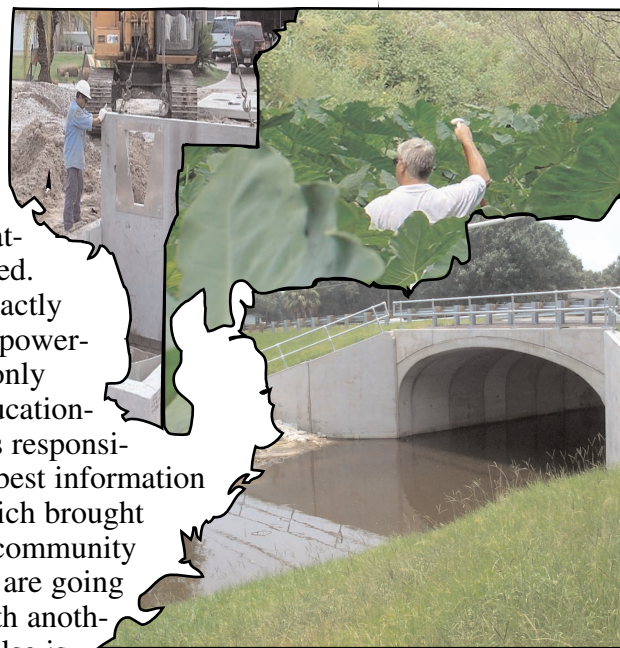


# Beyond the Pond

## FOCUSING ON ISSUES FROM BEYOND THE SCOPE OF ADOPT-A-POND

### So WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT

*Beyond the Pond.* You're thinking, "It's cute, it rhymes, but what's it all about?" We all know that Adopt-A-Pond is a unique program, but behind it all is the Hillsborough County Stormwater Management Section. This County Section has had the foresight to look past the stereotypical government mindset of minimums and fight the uphill battle to create a group that does far better work than anyone ever expected. There's one word for this kind of thinking-- *progressive*. And that's exactly how Stormwater operates, using progressive concepts in employee empowerment to engender creative solutions from their staff. The result is not only programs like Adopt-A-Pond that lead the nation in environmental educational concepts, but it also shows up in every other aspect of Stormwater's responsibilities from the Watershed Master Plans, which are now "considered best information available" by SWFWMD, to the stormwater Accelerated Program, which brought over 500 significant improvements in stormwater management to the community over the past 5 years. But this isn't the kind of thing you as the public are going to hear unless you happen to move in those circles. So here we are with another progressive idea: we're going use this publication to tell you what else is going on. Every quarter *Beyond the Pond* will feature articles about the various projects and intricacies of the Stormwater Management Section and stormwater management in general. After all, knowledge is the first step toward understanding, and understanding leads to everyone's betterment.



### TQM STORMWATER STYLE

#### the 411 on TQM from HCPWSM

By Ed Tapia

Every year the Stormwater Management Section holds a retreat where we review the past year's goals, look for areas for improvement, and establish goals for the next year. This is part of our "continuous improvement" efforts, which you may have heard of elsewhere as "total quality management." We figured, heck... if it can produce better quality cars why can't it produce better stormwater management. I'd like to share some of the guiding principles which we'll use this year to pursue our mission and our vision.

1. Create a collaborative culture, both internal and external.
2. Look at the long term and not the short term.
3. Build a "learning" organization, focused on continuous improvement.
4. Develop staff to their full potential through teaching and encouragement.
5. Build a confident spirited organization.
6. Inspire pride in every aspect of the job. When a person takes pride in their job, they do better work.
7. Focus on "Re-connecting" with the community.
8. Arouse a progressive community spirit. We're all responsible for developing a stronger, progressive community.

This new expanded format for *On Our Pond* is one of our many efforts to put this into practice.



## ANNUAL ART & ESSAY CONTEST For National Public Works Week

By Mariana Llanso

Stormwater is once again preparing to celebrate National Public Works Week on May 16-22, 2004. We'll hold our Fourth Annual Art & Essay Contest for elementary school children. The theme of this year's contest is, **'How Does Your Government Collect Rain Water and Take It Off the Roads to Prevent Flooding So We Can Drive Safely?'** The theme is designed to create an interest in children about the many functions of their Public Works Department.

The contest gets more popular each year; last year the theme was about 'Bridges' and we received over 400 entries. It was very difficult for our judges to select the winners because so

many submissions were excellent. Everyone was impressed with the detail, the creativity, and the amount of research kids had put into their creations. Public Works recognizes the teachers for their important role in making the Art & Essay Contest so successful and in helping us to educate children about public works.

School principals and guidance counselors will receive flyers announcing the Art & Essay Contest by the end of February. The Art Contest will have three categories, K - 1st grade; 2nd grade - 3rd grade, and 4th - 5th grade. The Essay Contest is one category as it's open to the 4th and 5th grades. Each category will have First, Second and Third Place winners. The Public Works consultants and contractors have strongly supported this program since its inception. Many have participated by donating prizes and refreshments for the awards ceremony. The prizes are great - last year the winners received tickets to Universal Studios, Disney World, and Busch Gardens!

## OLD FORT KING TRAIL Sorry cars, not this time!

By Martin Montalvo

One of the benefits of living in the sunshine state is the opportunity to recreate in the outdoors year-round. A new recreational opportunity will soon be available to the citizens of Hillsborough County: Old Fort King Trail.

Old Fort King Trail constitutes the first phase of the Hillsborough County Greenways Master Plan's Cross County Greenway trail concept. This master plan envisioned the creation of a countywide system of recreational trails and open space corridors, connecting with other trail projects in Pasco County and Manatee County.

This 6.5 mile "multi-use trail" will accommodate various activities including cycling, horseback riding, in-line skating, and walking. A large portion of the trail will be paved while the remainder of the trail will maintain a rustic hiking trail design. The trail will extend from Hillsborough County's John B. Sergeant Park, in Thonotosassa, north to Hillsborough River State Park. It starts along the east side of US Highway 301 to Holloman's Branch Creek after which the trail crosses US Hwy 301 and heads into publicly owned lands. On the west side of US 301 the trail continues on for another 3.1 miles through a combination of flat-woods and bottom lands adjacent to the Hillsborough River and its tributaries. This section of trail will use existing Jeep trails and fire cuts in order to prevent any additional impact to the surrounding area. This phase of the trail will end at Dead River Road where trail users will have the choice of heading west into the Hillsborough County's Dead River Park or north into the Model Dairy ELAPP site and, eventually, Hillsborough River State Park.

Construction for Old Fort King Trail will begin in the Spring of 2004 and is scheduled to take six months to complete.





## Ask AAP- It's pretty simple: you ask, we answer

Since we often get great questions from people throughout the quarter, we thought we'd use this space to answer some of the good ones.

That said, we need you to ask away. If there's anything you'd like to know about your pond, our program, pollution prevention, ecology, conservation biology, or anything else related, send me an email at [mcgee@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:mcgee@hillsboroughcounty.org). I'll do my best to find an answer, and if we publish your question, we'll send you a little something as a thank you.

? Is there a way we can get the County to practice what we preach? Do all county departments follow the Adopt-A-Pond approach to retention areas? -J.H.

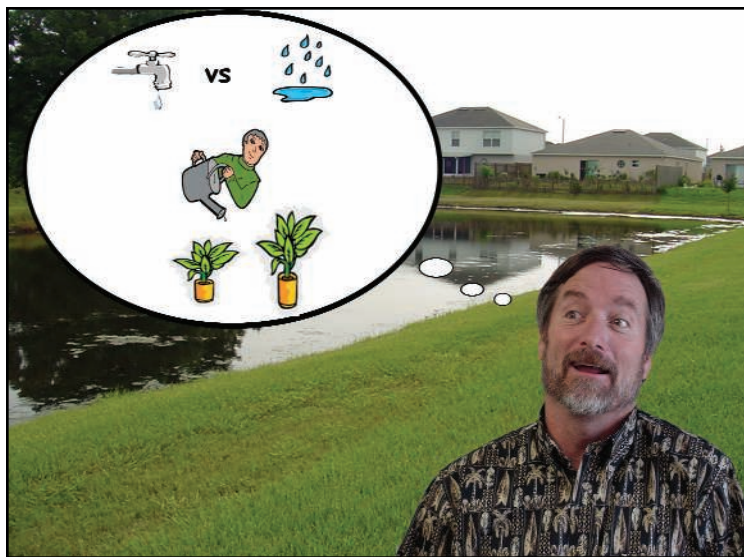
- Yes on practicing and preaching. Make comments to your commissioners about it. Citizens have the power to initiate policy changes through their commissioners. And no, most departments do not follow our approach. We're working on that too, but once more, persistent constructive citizen comment gets results. (But yelling turns people off, so please be nice.)

? Are there any private ponds which will provide limited access in return for cleaning up the ponds? -A.M.

- Bless you, may your very steps spring up with pickerelweed! Many ponds ask me for help like this, but I need the hands to offer them. People willing to look beyond their own yards are hard to find. I'm sure there are many ponds that would agree to this arrangement. I know a few; I can hook you up. And readers, here's your chance... let me know if you're up for such a deal!



## TRY THIS OUT- Experiments for you at home.



Like to play with stuff? Like to figure stuff out? Know someone (or a whole class of them) who needs something to occupy his time? Then this section is for you.

Is there a difference between tap water and rainwater? If rainwater is supposed to have more nutrients, wouldn't that be better for plants? Well let's find out!

1. Collect some rain. To add some fun, also collect some coming off the roof in a different bucket (you could use a rain barrel!)
2. Sprout some seeds. Beans grow fast, but choose what you like, just make sure that you have all the same kind of plants. You'll want at least 3 plants, but more is better, all in their own pots.
3. Set them up in the same location, so they all get equal amounts of light.
4. Measure the height of the plants with a ruler. Record it in a logbook.
5. Water one set with tap water, the second with plain rainwater, and the third with roof water, make sure you use the same amount of water each time.
6. Repeat step 5 every time they need water. Measure the height when you water.

Which will grow better? Try it out! Tell us what you learn!

*If you have a good idea for "Try This Out" let us know!*

Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners  
An Affirmative Action-Equal Opportunity Employer

## On Our Pond

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## VISIT THESE WEBSITES

LAKEWATCH: <http://lakewatch.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Extension Service: <http://hillsborough.extension.ufl.edu/>

Hillsborough County Watershed Atlas: <http://www.hillsborough.wateratlas.org>

Adopt-A-Pond Webpages (direct link):

<http://www.hillsborough.wateratlas.org/adopt/geninfo.asp>

Southwest Florida Water Management District: <http://www.watermatters.org>

Aquaphyte IFAS Newsletter: <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/aq-w02-1.html>

Florida Master Naturalist Program: <http://www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu/>

## POND SAMPLING RESULTS- Temperature

Because there isn't enough data to show a trend in 2004 yet, we're using data from 2003. Temperature is measured in degrees centigrade or celsius (°C). To convert these numbers to Fahrenheit, use this formula: (°C x 1.8) + 32.

As you can see in the chart (which, I might add, makes a whole lot more sense in color), temperature ranges from 18°C to 34°C. We don't have enough ponds sampling to tell us much about countywide trends, but temperature is necessary because other parameters such as dissolved oxygen are dependent on it. That means that processes in the pond will be different at different temperatures. Without accounting for the temperature when the pond is sampled, we'd never know if our other readings were accurate, or normal.

*In order to give you a clearer understanding of water quality we're going to focus on one parameter at a time. Additional water quality data is available from our office if you are interested.*

